

**AGING IN COMMUNITY COMMITTEE
OF THE
COMMISSION ON AGING**

Date: November 8, 2022
9:30am-11:30 am

“Affordable Housing for Older Adults in Montgomery County”

In Attendance: Wayne Berman (co-chair), Mary Sweeney (co-chair, AIC), Barbara Selter, Marsha Weber, Betsy Carrier, Eddie Rivas, Laurie Pross, Bob Levy, Joyce Dubow, Yvette Monroe, David Engel, Nanine Miekjohn, Mona Grieser, Sibon Ncube.

Staff: Pazit Aviv, MC AAA

Guests: Marcia Pruzan, Age-Friendly Montgomery; Sara Fought, Jewish Council for the Aging; Somer Cross, Manager of the Affordable Housing Programs Section of Montgomery County

Opening Remarks from the Co-Chairs: Mary welcomed everyone and thanked Somer Cross for presenting at today’s meeting on one of the Committee’s primary program areas – Affordable Housing. Mary and Wayne reviewed the agenda with the meeting’s featured topics, including the Committee Business portion of the meeting.

Approval of the Minutes: The minutes of the October 11, 2022 meeting were approved.

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSIONS: Affordable Housing Programs in Montgomery County: (The presentation is attached.)

Mary introduced Somer Cross, Manager of the Affordable Housing Programs Section of Montgomery County for her presentation on “Affordable Housing.” Ms Cross’ full power point presentation is attached. Highlights of the presentation included the following information:

Affordable housing for seniors is actually a multi-departmental effort in the County. It’s a little bit of the Affordable Housing section of the County and, a little bit of other sections of Department and Housing and Community Affairs (DHCA). It even includes other sections of other departments and agencies like Health and Human Services (HHS), Department of Public Safety (DPS), and the Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission (MNCPPC). Ms Cross’ presentation was an overview of all those efforts, with questions at the end.

The County has 3 main tools to create affordable housing for seniors in the County – providing monetary assistance to cover some of the costs, providing the land (which takes away a huge cost in development) and mandates to provide through the Code. The sources of this funding come from Federal, State, and local resources. Under the heading of “funding” there are 3 main programs the County uses to provide financial assistance to develop senior housing. These include: the Federal Investment Partnership Program, the Housing Initiative Fund (HIF), and a tax abatement program called PILOT.

The County has controlled how their land is developed for a long time. The County currently has 18 parcels out to bid for new development. Developers submit bids of what they would develop there and the County chooses. Because affordable housing is such a priority in the County, projects that can incorporate affordable housing are often chosen as the winner. Ms Cross reviewed some sites that actually call out affordable SENIOR housing to be built here in conjunction with County amenities like a fire station.

Essentially, the county's top affordable housing program is the moderately priced dwelling unit program. (MPDU). MPDU as the name implies, only applies when a developer builds a "dwelling unit". Dwelling units require separate kitchen and bath facilities. If a unit does not have that, there is no MPDU mandate. For senior projects that have assisted and memory care, residents are provided beds, not dwelling units so the MPDU program would not apply. On the Independent Living unit portion of those developments, or if a development is solely Independent Living, the project must provide 12.5% - 15%, depending on where it is in the County, of MPDUs. But, that is only for rental units. If a project is senior restricted and for sale, the Code requires that the developer pay a fee that goes into the HIF, to be used for other affordable development. The MPDU Program is a local Inclusionary Zoning program. The number and location of MPDUs are established during New Construction_Development, in the Preliminary Plan of Subdivision.

A 2018 County Senior Study showed that there are 274 Senior living facilities, made up of

- 1 active-adult homeownership community (Leisure World)
- 27 assisted living facilities
- 178 group homes
- 8 continuing care retirement communities
- 27 nursing facilities

Ms Cross then reviewed 5 recent existing Senior Housing Projects that have MPDU's as part of their development: These locations include: Willow Manor at Fairland, St. Anne's Senior Housing, Silver Creek Senior Living, Sandy Spring Village, and Victory Haven. Ms Cross also reviewed upcoming new senior living projects, which include Elizabeth House III in Silver Spring, the Village at Cabin Branch, HOC units at Willow Manor in Olney, Upton 2 – 62+ 150 units in downtown Rockville, the Carnegie at Washingtonian Center, Gaithersburg, as well as other planned developments currently in discussions.

Finally, Ms Cross ended her presentation by reviewing 4 other public and privately sponsored programs that can help older adults' better age in place. The programs include:

- Healthy Homeownership - Energy Efficiency Programs supported by PEPCO and the County;
- A Rental Marketplace Program launched by the DHCA during the pandemic to help people find housing;

- A Design for Life Program, sponsored by the State and the County, that allows for State and County real estate tax credits for renovations to independent living units that provide improved accessibility and related features; and
- Home Share Programs that allow senior homeowners the ability to offer spare rooms or ADU to rent.

A lively question and answer session followed Ms. Cross' presentation. As part of the questions and answer session, Ms Cross suggested that the CoA continue its advocacy for more affordable housing and to seek eventual modifications to the THRIVE 2050 plan to better plan for more affordable housing in the County.

BUSINESS MEETING:

- Wayne discussed the planned public forum to be sponsored by the CoA. The public forum is tentatively titled "Using Technology to Promote / Improve Aging in Place". The forum is planned for May 9, 2023. A working group has been formed to shape the forum and identify speakers and a location. The working group meetings are done over zoom and usually held every Monday afternoon at 4:00 pm. As we are still in the beginning phases of shaping the forum, Wayne encouraged those interested to participate on the working group and contribute their ideas to developing the forum. Others on the working group include Mary, Betsy, Sibbo, David, Barbara, and Mona.
- Pazit briefly discussed the County's Home Sharing program and indicated that it is starting to expand, thanks to the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding and a new pilot program. There have been 11 successful matches to date. The ARPA funding will be used to help get homes ready for home sharing.
- Pazit also briefly mentions that the survey of Villages for the "Hub and Spoke" administrative program is still being finalized. A report to the AIC should be ready in January 2023.

UPCOMING MEETING: The next AIC meeting will be held on Tuesday, December 13, 2022 at 9:30 am. The focus of this business meeting will be on "Lessons Learned in 2022 and the Road Ahead for 2023"

MEETING ADJOURNED: 11:20 am